

THE WAR'S EFFECT UPON WRITERS AND SALE OF BOOKS

WAR EFFECTS ON BOOK MAKING AND BOOK MAKERS

Opinions vary among American publishers as to the degree in which the book trade has been hit by the European war. One publisher says that the war will not make any appreciable difference, stating that most of the houses have made their lists of titles smaller anyway, but that the quantity of production will be about the same. He admits that European exportations will be cut off, but recalls the fact that previous years, the book trade has held its head above water.

This publisher, however, represents a house which is principally domestic in its dealings. Another leading publisher, whose lists contain many prominent English names, is more pessimistic in tone.

He points out the fact that although importations of English books already published are arriving the publication dates of forthcoming books are being cancelled. The authors, especially the big ones, will not make the hazard of a poor market and the publishers are willing to cancel because of the big cash advance they otherwise would have to make.

In regard to these advances it is inevitable if the war is protracted that the authors must accept an altered normal. It is reasonably fair that the big authors, who are accustomed to large advances, should consent to modified advances and a relatively early publication. In that case the first loss would be the best loss, and authors, printers, binders and publishers, facing the situation together, would share fairly any loss involved.

An interesting proof of the fact that the American fall publishing season is not going to be so much disturbed by the war, and the English season not disturbed so much as was feared, is found in the fact that "Innocent," Marie Corelli's new novel, in which she returns to her romantic vein, was at first announced as put off indefinitely because the English publishers could not bring it out this year, but it will now be brought out both in this country and in England. At first the American publisher, George H. Doran Company, expected not to be able to bring out "Innocent," and also the most important of their art books, "The Admirable Crichton," Barrie's play, the plates of the illustrations for which were being specially made in England. But the plates have now been received, and "Admirable Crichton" returns to their fall list.

Big Drop in Importations.

But even though books can be published abroad it is likely importation will be cut down, as the increased freight charges coupled with the high rate of exchange would penalize publishers. This means that a large variety of books familiar in the American market will not be seen this year. Most of the large illustrated books are printed in England, as are practical treatises on all subjects, scientific and philosophical books. In the fiction line too readers will realize quickly the difference when they are offered native writers.

On book collectors and dealers in rare books the war will fall most heavily. Without doubt foreign collectors will be depressed by the high exchange rate, and for some time, thus directing a vast amount of foreign wares to the American market and lowering prices. On the whole there will likely be a general restriction of activities in the book collecting world and the auction room.

As for the books demanded, bought and read the publishers agree that they will likely be of a rather specialized nature. The exploitation of vice and the various kinds of problem and agitation literature promise to be shelved in favor of books to a degree philosophically, that is, usually influencing public literary taste. Of war books of course the supply cannot equal the demand and those publishers are happy who are fortunate enough to have a war novel on their book list.

Concerning the problems of the actual manufacture of books in this country arising from the war's blockade on imports the Publishers' Association recently made the following interesting statement:

"Shut out from the world's supply of the English, the price of that metal has come up in the last ten days by leaps and bounds, which means that the cost of type and allied alloys are going up in response. The week has seen a 100 per cent. rise in the New York market and a 200 per cent. in the London market. This means that compositor rooms will husband their supplies and buy no more than they positively have to till this abnormally high price falls off."

Paper Outlook Serious.

"The paper outlook, since paper is not like the type crisis, capable of indefinite respite, is more serious. Normally the United States exports to the United Kingdom about 100,000 tons a year. Unfortunately for the book trade, however, the imports largely represent book papers. Besides this we import largely the raw materials of our better grade papers in the form of chemical wood pulp from Germany and also from all over Europe. A 6 per cent. rise in the price of the raw materials, an equal or greater rise in all book papers is immediately probable. The likelihood is that this country will be supplying most of the world's paper for some months to come, and that the price of paper for our paper mills and incidentally higher prices all along the line."

In regard to the situation in England a London writer says:

"It is hardly necessary for me to say that the book trade has received a very severe blow through the outbreak of war on the Continent. There is no trade which feels the effect of such a catastrophe more instantly. Except for books of a general descriptive, topographical or military nature dealing with the countries at war there has been a general stoppage of all people read nothing but newspapers. As for publishers, they are at this moment in despair."

"One of my publishing friends who is specifically engaged in the subscription of the book trade, business told me yesterday that the trade had received a knockout."

"If all publishers are in the same straits as myself," he said, "and I have good reason to believe they are, then it will be a desperate Christmas for everybody. The war has come so suddenly upon me that I haven't been able to sell anything else I'm up a tree. I've cut down or cancelled my printing, binding and paper orders, trimmed my advertising down to nothing and am going to mark time. The day after war was declared my daily orders for books fell 50 per cent. This will show you how serious things are. The book trade is falling at the end of a bad season and at the very beginning of one that promised something better."

"If matters do not improve one of the results will be the disappearance of the book trade from the number of titles issued as of the quantities of books supplied to the trade. The total number of books published this autumn in other words, probably will approximate the number published last autumn. It is almost too late for publishers to alter their lists, since many of their commitments are subject to contracts containing arranged dates of publication. This is especially the case with fiction. The only thing that publishers can do as a general rule is to cut down their production orders, and this means a tightening up among printers, binders, paper makers and all others concerned in the manufacturing of books."

Demand for Books Bearing on War.

One thing is certain, that all the publishers who were lucky enough to have listed fall books which in any way bear upon the European situation are facing

very well indeed. And these need not have a direct bearing at all. For instance, the publishers of Hazen's "Europe Since 1815" report that this book has, since the war was declared, sold five times as many copies to the trade as it usually averages in an entire year. The same condition obtains with books which have only a remote connection with the absorbing topics; publishers have caught at some line along which they can be re-furnished, have fixed them up and put them on the market to sell better than when new.

At Brentano's it is stated that the demand for war books has grown to large proportions and is increasing all the time. On Bernhard's "Germany and the Next War," Usher's "Pan-Germanism," Gross's "Secrets of the German War Office"—these are tying with the latest popular novels. Maps are in big demand, small maps and large, detailed ones. Even of Bartolome's automobile map there is a large sale, as on these the buyers can trace the route of troops from town to town. This last phase shows the growth of interest in the war; in the earlier stages it was the great multitude of people who sought maps, asking for the cheaper kinds, but now it is the more educated and wealthier who ask for expensive, complete maps on which they can follow events with color headed tanks or with flags.

In the book stores it is said that outside of fiction other books than war books are not selling as well as usual. As for the Christmas season they are not fearing a slump; some are hopeful of doing even more business than usual. This hope is in face of the fact that where usually by this time the Christmas trade has begun it has not yet opened up. But they say it naturally will be slow. Many of the Christmas importations have been cut off; the lack of Continental made Christmas cards will be especially conspicuous. But taking the situation as a whole they expect the season to be at least as good as under normal conditions.

Some of the publishers and booksellers doubt whether the demand for war reading is going to reach over into fiction, at any rate for any length of time. They think rather that the public is going to get a surfeit of war in the newspapers and that it soon will be demanding something different in the way of fiction. Magazine editors, too, it is said are discouraging authors from trying their talents on war stories.

How English Authors Are Occupying Their Time.

As regards our now more or less regular supply of fiction from England, the situation is doubtful. An indication of the English publishers have practically closed shop. So the English authors either must pack away their already written manuscripts or allow them to be published in America first, a thing they are very loath to do. And since they cannot have their work published it is obvious that many will not write very strenuously until things are more settled. If they had the spirit to write in such a time, a lot of them probably have not.

So a lot of British authors are temporarily at a standstill. We find in the columns of the newspapers a number of the more conspicuous of the guild are occupying their time. Anthony Hope, Rudyard Kipling and Sir Gilbert Parker serve as a good example. Wells, writing columns daily on the importance of aircraft in military manoeuvres and other relevant subjects; Conan Doyle doing the same; Maugham composing war poems for the purpose of keeping up enthusiasm; Maugham and Barrie undertaking explanatory missions to neutral Governments, etc. Indeed, so general has been this flux to political and diplomatic fields on the part of the eminent writers that much caustic comment upon the would-be universal qualifications of authors has been abroad.

John Lane, who has just arrived in this country to lecture, offers an indication of the less known writers have already arrived, thinking that this good time to break into the American market, or at any rate realizing they will have a better chance here than in England, where there is no chance at all.

A London Publisher on the War Situation.

John Lane, the London publisher, who arrived in New York last week, says that publishing conditions in England have improved wonderfully since the first days of the war.

"During the first three weeks," said Mr. Lane, "there was almost no business at all. Printers, binders, etc., were enlisting and going to war, thus threatening a shortage of materials, and then of extreme importance, there was no demand for books. And books, even if published, could not be reviewed, or receive any notice in the papers, which were being turned into war papers exclusively. From my viewpoint this was a most unfortunate situation, for I'm a firm believer in the value of publicity. For a while it seemed that the bulk of the fall lists would have to be held over, but conditions are gradually returning to a more normal basis. As a result, for the first time since the outbreak of war, I am now able to publish a number of my books. For a while it seemed that the bulk of the fall lists would have to be held over, but conditions are gradually returning to a more normal basis. As a result, for the first time since the outbreak of war, I am now able to publish a number of my books."

When asked what all the English writers were now doing, at a time when so few of them either felt like going about their regular work or could find a market for that work if accomplished, Mr. Lane replied:

"The artists and ordinary journalists are suffering most of all. I believe, of the cutting down of periodicals which feels the effect of such a catastrophe more instantly. Except for books of a general descriptive, topographical or military nature dealing with the countries at war there has been a general stoppage of all people read nothing but newspapers. As for publishers, they are at this moment in despair."

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THE WAR AND ITS LITERARY RESULTS

By BOOTH TARKINGTON.

Some "bad" writers will no doubt write "war stories" containing stock "adventure" and "romance," but perhaps there may be a great man who will produce a serious study of war, as Zola produced in his "Le Debutant." The only "good" stories of war are horrible.

By CONINGSBY DAWSON.

Of course the war will produce war novels in England, but I do not think that any of them are likely to be of much importance. A war novel written at the present time will lack perspective. As Mr. Heinemann reminds me in this summer, the novel which chronicled the Boer war most successfully was penned ten years after the event; moreover, by a woman whose sole authority was her imagination and the edited accounts of eyewitnesses' impressions. The same is likely to be true of this warfare. Anything written within the next twelve months will probably be journalistic and catch-penny.

The influence of the war on sales has been undeniably disastrous, though I had met with London publishers who could not be brought to see the situation. I believe that before Christmas the reading public would turn with zest to fiction as a relief from the newspapers.

But the result of the war in its literary influence on the English novel will, I believe, be beneficial. So far the increasing tendency of the English novel has been to mirror the fear of life rather than its courage. A part of this fear of life has been the form of parochialism, I mean by that the depiction of some narrow section of society which shuttles up and down the captivity of some more or less unkindly suburb. This is of course due to the manner of life of the bulk of English novelists; with few exceptions they are not prosperous and their books tell the story of their personal struggles. Suddenly the demand has come to every Englishman to live about himself, to show contempt for death and personal discomfort, to feel himself a throbbing part of a great cosmic heroism.

Strangely with the belief that death should be feared, there comes the realization that life is splendid. The street corner boys who are marching in Kitchener's army have felt it. They square their shoulders and tramp whistling, with illumined faces, to willing sacrifice. As a British Tommy writing back from the front expressed it, "It's better than foot-ball." It was his way of saying that some sorts of death are better than life. The nation has stepped out of its squirrel cage and the novelist, if he reflects sensations, cannot fail to record the emancipation. I think the result of the present warfare on English fiction will be books written by men who have heard the call to heroism, men who look beyond the petty belongings of sex and chronicle with sanity the nobler methods of spending this little handful of months which compose the history of our individual journeys from birth to death.

By ARTHUR WING PINERO.

Speaking seriously and as an optimist, I am firmly convinced that culture, not the trivial variety, of course, will be benefited through this war and so will the equally important culture of the remainder of the civilized world.

The Germans' culture for many years past has been their weakness because of the overbearing military ambitions that have clogged its progress.

Freud from those false gods, Germans eventually may really find their place in the intellectual sun at last.

The arts will emerge, he replied, from the vicissitudes under which they must suffer a temporary eclipse strengthened, purified, rekindled. I think the great war will do vast good to the arts of all the countries affected. We shall have less cynicism, a

AMERICA.

By W. J. DAWSON.

WHERE the workshop flings its plumes toward the sky,
Where the laboring engine groans as it pines,
Where the low tree crouches along the hill,
Where the lonely ranchman rides along the plain;
Where the Mississippi flows,
Where Shasta lifts his heron's
Day by day thy flag children trace thy name,
Forgetful they of days of ancient shame,
Of Emperors and Cæsar,
Beneath thy flag of stars,
Shall they falter? Shall they cease? Shall they endure?
Yes: their faith is very sure.

With the tempered pride of chastened confidence,
Level browed and eager eyed the race shall rise,
And their lips shall learn the fugal speech of power,
And the bragging boast shall perish utterly.
False gods of gold and lust
Shall crumble into dust,
Till, last of all, the nation's King shall come,
And on each high piled capitol and dome,
Wherein Right hath suffered loss,
Not the Eagle but the Cross,
Shall great obedient peoples and endure—
Yes: this end is very sure.

—From "America and Other Poems" (Lane).

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it or not, it must inevitably have upon them all.

Those of us who were in the war zone when the war cloud burst and for many weeks thereafter were deeply interested in noting the ways in which different persons, especially among our own countrymen and countrywomen, viewed the situation. We could not have asked for a more perfect touchstone. Many could not see beyond their disturbed holiday, their personal inconvenience. To mention the war in their presence was to bring forth a detailed account of their lost luggage or their delayed train journey. Others seemed able to feel only the commercial disturbance. Here and there one encountered an earnest questioning as to the war's effect on the growth of democracy, a deep thoughtfulness as to its relation to humanitarianism, to religious faith, to the emphasis of racial sympathies and the failure of conquest to overcome them. Here and there one met a person who was profoundly moved by the horror of the war as many are haunted by its horrors. In ten minutes talk about the war with any one of these people would result in an estimate of that person's qualities than a week's talk on any other subject would have given us. I think some of us at least will feel the same way about the war and the arts. Scores of writers may refrain from mention of the war. But we who read shall know what effect it has had upon their conceptions of life and death and of the soul of war.

By GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

Of course there will be the usual deluge of war fiction, but I think it will be only by the mere devourers of fiction. The intelligent public will want facts about the war, details at present withheld, for years to come. And after that deluge of dramatic facts, added to our present daily allowance (highly spiced with invention) war novels, stories and plays will seem mighty flat. Fifty years hence, after the histories of this war have been written and this second and relegated to the shelf, then no doubt a series of really great war novels will be written. Perspective as well as all the facts that nations will give to the world are needed, and the wise novelist and dramatist of to-day will leave that particular task to his grandchildren. Nothing can restrain the hawks of course, and the cheaper magazines and pulp papers will encourage them. But that doesn't matter. I think that there never has been a better chance for good novels on any subject than at present. While an intelligent interest in the war remains the obsession has passed, and people are only too glad to forget the anachronistic horror in absorbing fiction.

By CLARA E. LAUGHLIN.

I do not see how the war can do other than have a tremendous effect on literature and on all the arts. To most of us, however, it is the effect on the novel, the catalyst it came to be seen that everything else in life we had ever known was very unreal, that the extraordinary scenes in the midst of which we then found ourselves were the only realities. As a well known bookman I frequently met in London expressed it of himself: "The fellow I used to be, to be so keen about the form of parochialism, I mean by that the depiction of some narrow section of society which shuttles up and down the captivity of some more or less unkindly suburb. This is of course due to the manner of life of the bulk of English novelists; with few exceptions they are not prosperous and their books tell the story of their personal struggles. Suddenly the demand has come to every Englishman to live about himself, to show contempt for death and personal discomfort, to feel himself a throbbing part of a great cosmic heroism."

By JAMES FENIMORE COOPER AT YALE.

In his new book, "Memorials of Eminent Yale Men," the Rev. Anson Phelps Stokes includes the biography of James Fenimore Cooper, who was for three years a member of the class of Yale, 1806, and his expulsion from college for some time before. I graduated in the discipline of the college authorities did not rankle with him in after life is shown in a letter to Prof. Benjamin Billings, the latter's son, who writes: "He writes: 'I could wish you to mention me to Mr. Day and Mr. Kingsley; I dare say I should say Dr. Kingsley, but of this I am in the dark. He did his duty, and more than his duty by me; and could I have been reclaimed to study by kindness he would have done it. My misfortune was extreme youth. I was not 16 when you expelled me. I had been early and highly educated for a boy, so much so as to be far beyond most of my classmates. I was expelled from college, and played a boy of 13—all the first year. I dare say Mr. Kingsley never suspected me of knowing too much, but there can be no great danger now in telling him the truth. So well said. I graduated in the Latin that I scarce ever looked at my Horace or Tully until I was in his fearful presence; and if he recollects, although he had a right of trotting me about the pages in order to get me tired, he may remember that I generally came off pretty well. There is one of my college adventures which tickles me even to this day. Then the great novelist goes on to describe with almost undergraduate enthusiasm a successful 'bluff' in a Homer recitation."

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE.

Louis Joseph Vance has written many good stories, but "The Lone Wolf" is his masterpiece.

—New York World.

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By Crittenden Marriott

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